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Narrator

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Interviewer

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Video Photography

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Gladys Hopper -GH
Janet Worthington -JW
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JW: Mrs. Hopper, would you tell us about how you came to know Kam Wah Chung, what happened in you life that brought you to Kam Wah Chung and Doc Hay?

GH: I was took to him when I was just a baby. I was a premature baby and so little that they didn't expect me to live. They put me on a pillow and brought me from Drewsy, Oregon, over through Burns and over here to Doc Hay, when I was just little. He said that I was so premature that my left side of my organs hadn't fully developed. He gave them some medicine things to boil up, I guess, and they did it, and they give it to me...they said...and my aunt told me they give it to me for about six months and I finally started coming out of it.

That was my first experience that I know of being taken to the China Doctor...and...anyway...then my mother had epilepsy and they gave her some medicine, I don't know what it was exactly, but then I was orphaned and she died when I was just like seven years old and I was taken in by my aunt and uncle and brought here to Canyon City. We lived in the old hotel that was down here, I think it was called the Elkhorn hotel or the Airhead Hotel...Elkhorn, I think...here in Canyon City with them. As I developed a little bit older, I had also some nervous problems.

My mother Carol, my aunt, but my mother then, was going through a nervous strain and we took her to the China Doctor, because they couldn't help her much, she was hemorrhaging to death, more less, and they finally took her down there. The American Doctors had give up on her. They took her down to old Doc Hay and he gave her some round things that looked like red golf balls. They had us boil them, one to so much water and feed her those until they were gone, and when they were gone, she was well. It had saw her through. It had stopped her hemorrhaging and everything and she got well.

Then when I had my little girl [unclear] she was really nervous and when she started school they wanted me to take her...she had little fainting problems and they wanted me

to take her to the doctors, which I did, and the doctors told me she had a really bad heart and she was going to have to have heart surgery. Well, that scared me to death, so I took her to the China Doctor and he says, oh, no, he said her hearts something, but no surgery and he gave me some medicine...leaves, and sticks, and twigs, and stuff...a whole sack full of stuff to boil and feed to her. We gave it to her and he gave me a diet for her and I can't remember now what it was, it was many years ago. We boiled it all and it was terrible smelling stuff, but finally got her to drink it and, you know, she got over what ever it was, and then she did fine. They didn't think she had heart trouble anymore.

When I was a little girl, we always, all the kids around town always looked forward to Christmas and the holidays, cause Doc Hay would have candy brought from China, and he'd have little sacks, they were little brown sacks, and they said, they were made out of rice paper, and the little sacks would have little peanut butter kisses in them, peanut butter candy kisses. He'd have those and he'd fix a little sack of those for almost every little kid that would come down there for Christmas time, and I was talking to...who was it...was it [unclear]...is it her...I don't remem...or [unclear]...if she remembered him, and she said, yes, she remembered Doc's Christmas candy, the Chinese candy...getting holidays...he was quite and old fella.

That time when I was little, of course, you didn't have much electricity or anything then, and I was so little when they brought me over that they took me...he had them leave me on this pillow and take me out and hold me up in the bright sunshine, so he could see me in this bright sunshine, and feel of me. And, he felt of me out in the sunshine and my aunt said, that he just looked at me a long time and held me so long in the sunshine and felt of me and that's when he made his diagnosis. The way they did...the Chinese...you know and they took me home. Then we went to him for a lot of different things. You know, if you had bad headaches, you would go and he would give you that medicine to rub on, that Chinese liniment. That was kinda a little four cornered tiny bottle and it was strong. You could tell when a person walked into a room a long ways away that they'd been to the China Doctor, because it really smelled, but it was good. I still got some of the little bottles; they're keepsake bottles that it came in. They were little bottles that were thin on the bottom, about like that on the bottom, and then they would taper up and they had real long necks on them, thin necks, about like that, with little stopper plugs in them.

And...um...I'm trying to think of different...of anything else that...I know when you went down there, you went in the front part there and there was a store in the front part of the...the front part of the...Chinese Doctors offices there. You could buy stuff there and then you could go in the back, I remember they used to have Chinese gambling in that back of that building too. I can remember uncle talking, he was a white gambler, and I can remember him talking about going down to the Chinese and gamble with them. My mother would say, yeah, and they will take all your money too. And, the kids would go and they would...they had an old tin roof on that building...some of the older high school kids, the rough kids, they go and they'd do what they called Tic-Tac-Toe the roof. They had something that they'd pull and it would go, dut ,da, dut, da, dut, dut, dut down the roof and the Chinese people would come a boiling out...the old China men...come

boiling out of there...scare them and chase them off. They were still there when I was little. They had the tailing piles out there and all around there and, you know, there was a lot of places kids could hide and do you down...that way...down there at those China buildings. There was a lot more buildings. I can't remember exactly...there were...where the store is now and then there were big buildings on back over to the...I'm visioning...pointing over to the right of it. There was buildings...there was quite a little tiny village down there. They had...you know the Chinese graveyard?

JW: Well, that's a good question. Where is that exactly?

GH: It's up on the hill there, above John Day.

JW: Like above where the Dairy Queen is?

GH: No, it's where the forest...no...a...

GW: On the hill across from the shopping center where Chester's is?

GH: Yeah, yeah. Back up there, there is a flat up there, but you used to go up there...a...where the...they had Forest Service up in there...after while...but then it would around up in there where the Forest Service was and up in there there's a little flat up in there...several graves up there. We went up...we hiked up there one time after one of the old Chinese died...scared to death...just the bravest kids to go up there, you know...they'd venture up there and scare us. They would take food and stuff up there and they had this funeral and there was bowls around this grave and there was sticks, apparently now they say they were bamboo, but I don't know, sticks with food wrapped around bamboo sticks, and that was to feed the spirits on there way to heaven. They brought food in these bowls...rice...one thing and another in these bowls around the grave. Real brave of us, because they told us there were spirits up there, when the Chinese left they kept guard on it, so it really...really was something to go up there...fight the Chinese spirits, so to speak. I remember that, you know, I hadn't thought of that for a long time, kinda comes back to you after awhile, but I'm eighty years old and that had to have been seventy years ago.

JW: About seventy years ago?

GH: Yeah, or more.

JW: You were about ten years old?

GH: Up till about then. There's quite a few kids go there then.

JW: Let's talk about the store and the building that you went to when you went in to take your daughter in for treatment or when you went in for treatment. Do you recall something about the room was it brightly lit or was it—

GH: No, it wasn't any brightly lit rooms. Mostly, mostly [unclear] like rooms...lighting...because, he would know by feel, you know, he was almost blind and he felt more, he'd reach out and touch and feel the skin and diagnose more than he would by looking at any special part.

JW: Did he have the herbs in one...all his treatments in one—

GH: He had them all in rows. You'd go in the front...if I remember right...there was kinda a counter across...as you go in there'd be a long counter across and there was shelves behind it and rows and rows of little bottles and jars and stuff on those shelves. He had another room there...you could smell...but he cooked stuff in...he cooked stuff and sent medicine home with people...it just isn't dry stuff. He'd cook this stuff and you could smell it cooking, so there had to be a room in there someplace where they cooked, but I was never in it. Then he had another where you went for him to look at you, kinda a patient-doctor room, beyond where the store was. He didn't look at you in the store itself.

JW: This is kind of a diagram of what the place is like...I got it upside down for you, I'm sorry. [Showing her a floor plan]

GH: I haven't been in it since I was—

JW: You haven't? Oh, that's good! Okay, so you came in. Here's the front door.

GH: Yeah, I came in and went through and there was like a counter clear across here.

JW: Clear across there? Okay, let me put that in. [Writing on the floor plan]

GH: There was shelves up here along, all above it, and then I don't know, I think this is where they cooked and stuff...kept stuff back in there. I think we went probably this way to go in to be examined...one way or the other to be examined...I can't remember exactly, because, I was pretty little when it comes down to it.

JW: But, you definitely went into a different room than this big room where you walked in?

GH: Uh-huh.

JW: So, it could have been this room right here, or it might have been that room right there? One or the—

GH: It was close to the front. And, they must have did there cooking...other stuff back up in here someplace.

JW: Yeah, this is a cook stove here, it's probably where they did that. When he would take you in for examining did he shut the door there, or just take you into one of these rooms.

GH: I can't remember.

JW: You can't remember, but you do remember just going into a different examining room.

GH: Uh-huh.

JW: Anything else you remember about this room...where things were? Was there a heater in there...some kind of stove?

GH: I don't remember.

JW: You don't remember a stove? Do you remember anything about the floors?

GH: Nope. Not unless they were just wooden, I don't have any idea.

JW: Probably so. Any chairs in here...stools?

GH: There were chairs in there.

JW: Chairs?

GH: Where were they? They were just plain old wooden chairs.

JW: Straight back?

GH: yeah, wooden chairs.

JW: Where would those have been do you think? Were they close to this counter, or—

GH: Gee, I don't...I don't know about out in here. I was thinking where we went in to be examined.

JW: Where you went in to be examined there were chairs?

GH: Yeah.

JW: For you to sit in?

GH: Yeah...Uh-huh...Seems like there was a table out in here someplace.

JW: Okay, anything else that you recall about the building? What about outside the building?

GH: Well, there was always that stairway that went upstairs to the Chinese room.

JW: What was the Chinese room upstairs? What was upstairs?

GH: There isn't any upstairs there anymore is there? I don't know what was up there.

JW: You don't know what was up there? [Both laugh]

GH: That was another Chinese mystery. Believe me. No, I don't know what was up there. You'd hear wild stories, you know, when you was a kid. You could hear all kinds of spooky things.

JW: Right. What kinds of things did they tell you?

GH: Well, I know that they said, they used to have the big opium poker parties down there, but there was another big building of some kind there. I can't think what it was; it was amongst them tailing piles. The tail piles probably come after, you know, because they...there in Canyon crick...but, where the park and stuff is that was all Chinese village.

JW: Do you remember about how many buildings there might have been there?

GH: Well, I don't know, but it seems like there must have been two or three, or more, probably more than that. They had those little Chinese huts around, because they lived in different places down in there.

JW: How big were those huts that they lived in?

GH: Oh, I don't know, probably about like a room.

JW: About the size of one room.

GH: I would presume.

JW: And, what were they made of?

GH: Just...well, I called them huts...just had little houses...probably boards. Those are kids recollections, you know, you can get pretty impressed when you are a kid.

JW: That's right.

GH: And things are spooky, especially when they are telling you Chinese goblins are going to get you and all kinds of demons are going to come out of the cemetery after you.

Scared the daylights out of you! They'd come out sometimes when they knew you was out there and make weird sounds. We'd run clear up to main street...scared the daylights out of us.

JW: Who was doing this? Who was making the sounds?

GH: The Chinese.

JW: The Chinese?

GH: Yeah, when they knew we was out there and scared, they'd come out there and they'd really put us up town. Take us a long time for us to get up enough nerve to go back again. [Both laugh]

JW: What kinds of things...did they make noises?

GH: Yeah, just screeches, and noises, and beat little pans...like the devil was a getting you and you knew he was...just really scare the daylights out of you.

JW: That's amazing, really amazing. Is there anything else you remember about the buildings...outside of the buildings? Was there a garden, or a pond, or anything out around the buildings?

GH: I don't remember.

JW: Don't remember anything?

GH: Not really. I'm sure there was...I'm sure there was gardens down in there of some kind, but I wouldn't swear to it.

JW: Would you tell us about Doc Hay? What did he look like?

GH: He was a little man. He was very, very old and he couldn't see good. He scared you too much to look too close.

JW: Why was he frightening?

GH: Because, he was the Chinese Doctor.

JW: Oh.

GH: Keep the kids in line pretty good...threaten to take them to the China Doctor and he'd do all kinds of things...all kinds of dealings and stuff down there in that China Town. Of course, the big kids didn't help when they got past the little kid stage of getting scared, then they'd get a bunch of us down there and they'd all get down there and sneak around and make noises. It was terrible...wasn't good. [Both laugh]

JW: You said he was short; about how tall do you think he was?

GH: Oh, I don't think Doc Hay was much...was...I don't think he was even as tall as I am maybe...maybe 5 feet 5 or around there, I don't think he was much taller than that. Little wisened old man when I was a little girl, you know, he was a very, very old man then...so. And then there was the Chinese, you know they had the restaurant, the Chinese restaurant up town and there was the Chinese that had that...can't think of his name...Lung...

JW: Lung On?

GH: Lung On, Yeah.

JW: Yes, he was Doc's Partner.

GH: Yeah, he run the restaurant mostly...took charge of a lot of stuff like that. He took care of their financial obligations more, Lung did.

JW: When you went to see Doc Hay, or when you took someone to see Doc Hay, how did you pay him?

GH: With money.

JW: With cash?

GH: Yeah.

JW: With cash money?

GH: Um-huh...Yep.

JW: What about Lung On, do you know about some of the other businesses he had in town?

GH: Not really. I know they did the restaurant...that one big restaurant up town. They had...he had...they had their finger in a lot of different things that they brought money in from, I know.

JW: Oh, did they?

GH: Well, yeah, I heard the people talk about. My foster dad was kind of a gambling rounder, when you come right down to it, you know, and he knew all of them and he knew how they gambled and he gambled with them a lot and he'd tell about things...keep a little kid mindin', I tell you what. If you wanted something you could go to Lung On and Doc Hay and they'd...pretty soon you'd be able to get it.

JW: Really?

GH: Yeah.

JW: Lung On had the car dealership in town?

GH: Yeah, I think it was a Chevy garage or...it's where a...was where a...what's in there now...Len's Drug is in there now, I think. That was the old Chevrolet garage right in there and then Bensons shoe store...hotel and shoe store was next.

JW: Oh, was it?

GH: Yeah, Course there isn't any of that in there now, is there?

JW: No, I think things have all changed.

GH: I don't even know if the shoe store is there anymore. I don't know...I don't think so.

JW: When Doc Hay gave you medicine, you always got the medicine right there?

GH: Yeah.

JW: He handed it to you and it was in a bag?

GH: It was in a bag. Sometimes if it was something that they'd cook up, why he'd give you jars of it.

JW: What kind of a jar would it be?

GH: Chinese jar of some kind. They would be glass jars, but they'd have Chinese writing on them. I never did keep any of them, darn it.

JW: What about Doc Hay's ability to speak English? Could you understand?

GH: I think, Yeah, I think so.

JW: You could understand?

GH: I think so. I think I remember being able to understand him. I think so, I won't swear to it, otherwise I can't think that I could remember different things.

JW: [unclear]. You talked about the card games that went on in there, what other kind of gambling did you—

GH: I don't know if they did.

JW: You just heard that, that they had card games?

GH: Yeah, card games. They played some kind of dice games...I think...but I don't know...that's hearsay, I never saw them.

JW: You just heard that that was what was happening?

GH: Yeah.

JW: What about the opening of the museum? Do you recall when they discovered that the museum was there...that the place was there and had been closed up and—

GH: Let's see, who was it who went in there? Gordon Glass had that all down.

JW: Uh-huh. He was very instrumental [unclear]

GH: At that time, I was living out at Silvies Valley out at the ranch and all you heard was second hand stuff from town that was in the newspaper and you'd read it, and the woman who mostly did it is dead and gone, but Gordon Glass had all of that stuff.

JW: When you read the newspapers or heard people talk about it, did they talk about what condition the store was in, when they went in, after all those years?

GH: Said it was just...it was supposed to be in good condition except the doors just shut and it stayed the way it was.

JW: So, no one broke in?

GH: No, no one had ever broke in, as far as I know, wasn't any...

JW: Maybe, because the children were taught not to go?

GH: Taught not to...they were scared to.

JW: Do you know about any items from the store...that any things souvenirs that people might have or items that are around that were in the store or pictures? You mentioned you had a picture at on time of you as a baby there.

GH: I might have some out in...in some of the old stuff, but I don't...dad Hopper might of had something, but you see our house...everything we had burned up. We had a house fire when I was in the eighth grade and it burned up just about everything that we had like that. But, Daryl's family had the ranch out there and they never did...they were very fortunate...I don't remember that at all. They might have had something, I don't know.

JW: You think he might still have some?

GH: I can't think anything just off hand...I said, I did have.

JW: Is there anything else you want to tell us about—

GH: I don't know anything that would be of any interest to anybody.

JW: Everything is of interest. You have lots of good details here.

GW: You mentioned that you had taken your daughter shortly after she was born to Doc Hay? What year was that?

GH: She was in the first grade.

GW: She was in the first grade?

GH: Yeah, that was in...that'd been...she was born in '43'...had to been like in '49' something like that...'48', '49', '50'...along in there.

JW: We would like to that you so much...lots of very good details to add to the stories here. We really appreciate it.

GH: Wish I could remember it, you know, like it used to be. There are times that are real vivid to me and there are times my mind don't work as good as it used too.

JW: Well, I think you recalled a number of different things today, you've thought about the Christmas candy, did he just hand that to you?

GH: You know what...who was it, I said to them the other day, I said, "Doc Hay", and they said "yeah, and the Christmas candy", "did you ever get any of the Christmas candy?" Who was that? Was it Lois?

JW: It could have been, because I know Lois came to see you, but could have been somebody else.

GH: Anyway, they remembered the Christmas candy too.

JW: Did they? So, would you make a special trip to go to the store just so you could get the—

GH: No, the kids never went and got them. He had it fixed and he'd give it to our parents when they went in...send home to the kids. It was always at Christmas time or some special time, you know, he'd have stuff there to send, especially at Christmas everybody got a bag of peanut butter kisses, and they were wrapped in brown rice paper, and they were really good, yeah, they really were.

JW: Okay, thank you very, very much.

GH: I wish I was more help.

GW: You were great!

JW: You were really good...gave us lots of good details!

GW: End of interview.